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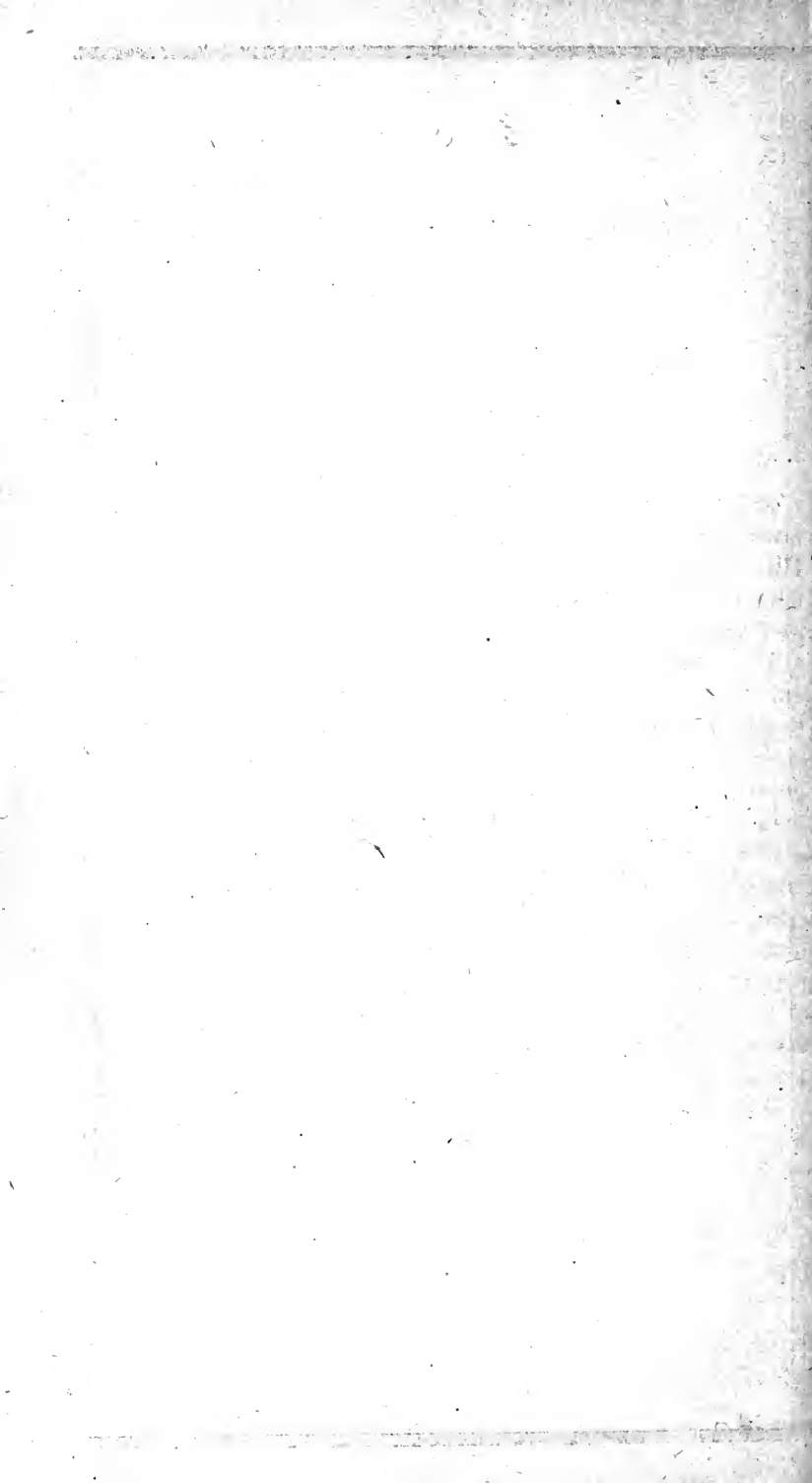
REMARKS OF ROBT E. C. STEARNS,

AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE

California Academy of Sciences,

ON THE DEATH OF

BENJAMIN PARKE AVERY.





California Academy of Sciences.

REGULAR MEETING, DECEMBER 6th, 1875.

MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY:

Since our last meeting the telegraph has brought us sad news—information of the death of our fellow-member, the Hon. Benjamin Parke Avery, United States Minister to China, who died in the early part of November at the city of Peking.

The many excellences of the deceased, the co-operative spirit which he ever manifested in all matters pertaining to the welfare of his fellow-men—quietly, because he was singularly modest and undemonstrative, yet nevertheless persistingly pursuing the even tenor of what he considered his duty—and that duty the advancement of civilization in a new State, the promotion of knowledge, whether in Literature, Science, or Art,—and the general refinement and elevation of the Commonwealth in which he had made his home; such qualities and such services make it eminently proper, that we should inscribe on the permanent records of the Academy, an appreciative recognition of his life and labors, as well as an appropriate expression of our esteem, and of our sorrow for his loss.

With the example of his unassuming but honorable career before us,—too brief but yet well filled with useful work,—it would be in discord with its harmony, to expand these remarks into formal eulogy.

In a letter dated July 5th of this year, the last which I received, he wrote:

“ Shut within the walls of our Legation, we are as much alone as if we were in one of the old glacial wombs of the Sierra Nevada—to think of which makes me sigh with longing, for was I not born anew therefrom, a recuperated child of Nature? Your letter with bay-leaves was right wel-

come, and gave me a good sniff of Berkeley. It was pleasant to receive the University bay, although I am not an Alumnus, and can boast no Alma-Mater except the rough school of self-education."

The closing line above his autograph is "O, California, that's the land for me!" Enclosed with his letter, were a few plants collected by him upon the broad summit of the mouldering walls which surround the ancient city where he died. Our friend has gone—he has found the tranquillity of the grave in a country remote from his native land—from the California he loved so much; far from those he loved and the many who knew and loved him, and who would have deemed it a privilege to have been near him at the final moment, and to have mingled their last farewells with his. The particulars of the closing scene have not yet been received. We may be sure, however, that he looked into the future without fear, and faded serenely, as the twilight sinks into night.

Those who knew him best, and who enjoyed the precious freedom of intimacy will tell you, that his life was conspicuous for its purity—his character for its many virtues—his intellect for its refined and delicate culture—his heart for its tender and generous sympathy. The possession of these qualities endear a man to his fellow men; they constitute a charming whole, whose priceless web is woven from the choicest graces of our poor humanity—they form an enchanted mantle whose shining folds hide the poverty of human limitations.

So lived and walked our friend among us, crowned with the affection and respect of all who knew him. I do not say that he was perfect, and yet if fault he had I know it not, nor never heard it named.

Here let us rest—grateful that so true a life has been a part of ours. We place our tribute on his grave, and say good friend—farewell!

Resolved, That the California Academy of Sciences has learned with profound regret of the death of the Honorable Benjamin Parke Avery, a fellow member and late United States Minister at the Court of Peking; that we hereby recognize and express our high appreciation of his many private virtues and public services.

Resolved, That these resolutions be spread on the records of the Academy and published in the proceedings.

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